



## New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection and Permanency	Effective Date:
Volume:	I	Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles	
Chapter:	A	Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles	4-25-2010
Subchapter:	1	Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles	
Issuance:	200	<b>Case Management Philosophy</b>	

### Purpose:

This issuance memorializes the Division's Case Management Philosophy.

### Authority:

- NA

### Policy:

#### A) Basic Tenets 12-1-82

CP&P is a public social service agency charged by state statute with the dual responsibilities of preserving and strengthening family life and ensuring that children are protected from actual or potential harm. Within these statutory parameters and the limits of existing resources, CP&P responds to the needs of its clients in a manner consistent with the principles of good professional practice and a philosophy of service delivery. This philosophy, amplified below, is guided by four basic tenets:

- Parents have primary responsibility for the care and well being of their children.
- CP&P involvement with children and families is guided by an approach of least intrusive intervention emphasizing parental responsibility and the privacy of the family.
- Specific goals and procedures directed toward a permanent plan are instituted whenever a child is placed outside his own home.
- Intervention and planning are goal directed, task oriented, time limited, and specific to the identified needs of the family.

Whether the family is referred for services or requests services and whether the services are arranged for or provided directly, all actions taken and services provided are based on the above tenets.

## **B) Least Intrusive Intervention** 12-1-82

The principle of least intrusive intervention is based upon the recognition that:

- every family has a right of privacy and freedom from unwarranted governmental intervention; and
- while the primary responsibility for the care of children rests with their parents, governmental involvement is sometimes necessary to protect the child and/or strengthen and preserve the family; and
- the ability of the parents to provide adequate care for the children is best supported by marshaling resources from within the family's own community.

The goal of CP&P intervention is to restore the family system to the point where the parents can assume full responsibility for the care of their children without governmental involvement. The process through which this goal is achieved begins with a determination that a service need exists, followed by an evaluation of the family's needs and strengths to determine which specific services may be utilized most productively. The Worker and the parents then establish a goal-directed plan of tasks and services which are specific to the identified needs of the family. CP&P intervention terminates when there is no need for protection of the child and when the parents are able to assume their responsibilities. CP&P does not prolong its involvement even though this time-limited intervention may result in the family's returning for services at a later date. Since CP&P services are specific to the problems identified, recidivism is not necessarily seen as indicating failure in service delivery. When a family reapplies or is referred, CP&P intervenes based on its current needs.

## **C) Least Restrictive And Close Proximity** 4-5-2010

Federal Law Requires least restrictive setting and close to home -- When a child's safety can be assured only through separation from his family, Federal law requires that placement be made in the least restrictive setting available, in close proximity to the parents' home, consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child.

Definition of a "least restrictive" setting -- A placement that is the most family like. A relative's home is least restrictive, followed by a resource family home, a group home, a residential center, and a correctional facility.

Definition of "Close proximity" -- Child is placed in a home whose location is accessible to the parents and does not hinder contacts between parent and child.

Continuity and stability of education placement -- The placement of the child in resource family care takes into account the appropriateness of the child's current educational setting and proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement. CP&P coordinates with local educational agencies to ensure that the child remains in the school in which he or she is enrolled at the time of placement, or, if remaining in the "home" school is not in the child's best interests, provides immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school. See CP&P-VII-A-1-100.1, Educational Stability, for determining best interests of the child in these matters.

Return home is first choice -- After a child's placement, permanency planning efforts are always first directed toward returning the child home. When return home is not a -viable alternative, CP&P expedites the most appropriate permanent plan for the child.

Frequent contacts are important during placement -- Research and experience show they facilitate reuniting the family. To reduce the initial trauma of placement, facilitate immediate contact and visitation with parents and siblings. Thereafter, for all children in out-of-home placement with a goal of reunification, provide weekly visits with their parents, siblings and other interested parties. Gradual reunification should be promoted through flexible scheduling that allows for visitation on evenings and weekends. This will give families time to adjust to living back together.

Contact with family -- Arrangements are made for contacts through telephone calls, cell phones or other wireless devices, written correspondence, and visitation. If the parents or child need transportation for visitation, the Worker helps the parents arrange appropriate transportation, provides the transportation directly, or provides reimbursement to the parent or child. See II D 1100, Supervision and Contacts During Placement. The Local Office Bank Account Fund may be used to assist the family with transportation costs. See CP&P-IX-F-1-300, Local Office Bank Account (LOBA): CP&P-IX-F-1-300, The LOBA Fund; CP&P-IX-F-1-300.12, Expenditures for Transportation.

The resource parents are included in the negotiations to determine a visitation schedule. Ideally, the visitation schedule should be developed at a Family Team Meeting. The details of the visitation schedule are included in the CP&P Form [26-83](#), Visitation Plan. All participants in the development of the schedule sign and receive a copy of it.

Community connections assist with visitation -- Regular visitation is also supported by our commitment to neighborhood-based placement, eliminating the barrier of distance and the consequent expense and time associated with distant visits. Our connection with the community also allows us to develop options for supervised visitation outside of the CP&P offices.

Regularly review the visitation schedule -- The nature and frequency of parent and child contacts are reviewed (at a minimum) at all Placement Conferences,

both internal and external. See CP&P-IV-A-3-200. The schedule should also be reviewed at all Family Team Meetings as long as the child remains in out-of-home placement. The Worker, his Supervisor, the parents, and resource parents and all other interested parties share responsibility for identifying obstacles to having these contacts and developing a plan to overcome them.

#### **D) Service Model** 12-1-82

In order to provide appropriate services to children and families with special needs, CP&P provides a broad system of services directed not only to the child, but also to his family and to other significant individuals in the family's social system. Given the agency's emphasis on home-based and community-based services, adequate and appropriate services are delivered in partnership with other agencies and service providers. Local Offices rely on local school districts for effective educational services, local mental health centers for effective mental health services, etc. Establishing a close, cooperative, working relationship with other community agencies is vital to the success of this approach.

Specifically, CP&P carries out its service delivery role through direct service provision, coordination and monitoring of service, purchase of service, and information and referral. These elements are integrated through a system of case management which defines both an approach to service delivery and the role of the Worker within that system. The case management system includes decision making guidelines, permanency planning standards, monitoring procedures, and case recording requirements which guide the Worker in fulfilling his responsibilities and provides the mechanism for management control and accountability.

#### **E) Worker Role** 12-1-82

Within the case management system, the Worker provides certain services to the client. He investigates, assesses service needs, provides services directly or arranges for the services through a service provider, works cooperatively with the provider, monitors the case progress, and revises the case plan as needed. The Worker's primary functions are:

- direct services provider, when necessary and appropriate,
- broker, community outreach and advocacy, and
- monitor.

As a direct service provider, the Worker personally delivers services to the client, family, and other individuals as needed. Services are provided directly when one or more of the following conditions exist:

- The service activity is statutorily mandated to CP&P and cannot be delegated, e.g., protective services investigations or court ordered services.
- The service is not available from other sources.
- The nature of the relationship, case, or other unique circumstance indicate that the service will be more readily accepted or effective if provided directly.

The limitation on the direct service role of the Worker is based upon two assumptions:

- 1) Given the multi-problem family situations that characterize the CP&P caseload, it is not possible for any Worker or any service provider to meet all the diverse needs.
- 2) Existing community resources should not be duplicated, but should be coordinated to provide a service delivery network. A mechanism for identifying gaps in service and working towards developing those services that are essential to this particular community should be set up by the Local Office with Area Office cooperation.

As a broker, the Worker works with the client and the services community, assessing, arranging for, and providing services in accordance with a case plan. The Worker involves the client in assessing family needs and establishing a case plan, maximizing the client's abilities and the use of available resources. The Worker and the client develop a contract to reflect the case plan and to specify focused, time-limited tasks which encourage and place emphasis on the parent's continuing responsibility. The Worker also assesses the availability of community resources which are appropriate to the client's needs and assists the client in making use of such resources. When community resources are not available to meet the client's particular needs, the Worker provides services directly.

As a monitor, the Worker oversees the provision of services and records the case plan, the contract, and client progress. Monitoring assists the Worker in meeting other internal and external requirements, such as reviews to evaluate plans and service delivery. Monitoring also facilitates the process of recording activities performed by the Worker for administrative and clerical staff. In order to assist the Workers with carrying out this role, the Local Office must be aware of and assist in the development of a wide variety of community services.

#### **Procedures:**

None

#### **Key Terms (Definitions):**

Case management is a structured approach to the delivery of services within which a series of interrelated and complementary systems exist for servicing and managing the CP&P caseload. It includes:

- service delivery philosophy,
- permanency planning,
- standardized case recording,
- case plan review,
- case progress and caseload monitoring,
- computerized information system.

In case management, general management principles are applied to the system within which individual casework services are delivered. These principles include identifying specific target objectives, setting dates for achievement, identifying measures that indicate progress and successful outcomes, monitoring against those measures, and a feedback system that triggers corrective action when needed.

Case management is designed to assist the Worker in the provision of services to individual clients as well as to provide the supervisor and Worker with the information necessary for the administration of child welfare services on a statewide basis.

**Forms and Attachments:**

None

**Related Information:**

None